

Blum House
630 Louisiana Avenue
Baton Rouge
East Baton Rouge Parish
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-1126

HABS
LA,
17-BATRO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

BLUM HOUSE

Location: 630 Louisiana Avenue (between Royal and Napoleon Streets), Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana. USGS Baton Rouge West Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates 15.674395.3369290

Present Owner: Bert S. Turner

Present Use: Private Residence.

Significance: Located in a historic section of Baton Rouge called Beauregard Town, the Blum House is a good example of a mid to late nineteenth century two-story townhouse with a side hall plan.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical history:

1. Date of erection: Mid to late nineteenth century. The date is difficult to pinpoint as the plan of the house was common from mid to late nineteenth century. In the chain of title, starting from 1852, the property was always sold "together with buildings and improvements," although it is unlikely that that refers to this house in its present form. In any case, the house does predate 1891, as it is recorded in Sanborn's Insurance Map of Baton Rouge for that year.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of property, found in the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge Conveyance Records, Centroplex, Baton Rouge:

"A certain lot or parcel of ground together with all the buildings and improvements thereon situated in that

BLUM HOUSE

HABS No. LA-1126 (Page 2)

part of the city of Baton Rouge known as Beauregard Town and designated on the official map of the City of Baton Rouge made in 1885 by Messrs. Waller and Smart, as Lot number four (4) of square forty-four (44) and on Gills map, made in 1855, as Lot number six (6) of square forty-four (44), measuring 64 feet front on Africa Street by a depth of 102 feet, more or less, along St. Napoleon St." (Africa St. became Louisiana Ave. in 1919, and St. Napoleon became Napoleon in 1942).

April 20, 1852, Conveyance Book G, p. 51. Raymond Lafon to Justin Roy, Lot 6, Square 44, measuring 60' on Africa St. by 120' depth on Napoleon St. together with buildings and improvements. \$1,000

March 1, 1856, Conveyance Book M. p. 67 Justin Roy to Aaron Blum, the above property, \$900.

December 16, 1867, Conveyance Book W, pp. 324-325. Aaron Blum and his wife, Caroline, separated and she received the following property:
(1) Half of lot 6, 60' front on Africa St. by 60' front on St. Napoleon St., together with buildings and improvements, acquired by present vendor from Justin Roy.

(2) 9 feet (English measure) front on St. Napoleon St. by 60 feet (French measure) in depth, part of south half of lot 6 of square 44, together with improvements.

Property appraised at \$1,950, together with an iron safe and one lot of household and kitchen furniture.

August 14, 1876, Conveyance Book 3, p. 490. Aaron Blum to Caroline Blum, part of lot 6, square 45, 21' front on St. Napoleon St. by 60' depth. \$100

BLUM HOUSE

HABS No. LA-1126 (Page 3)

Conveyance Book 4, p. 424. Aaron Blum to Caroline Blum. In previous act, square 45 has been corrected to read square 44.

February 6, 1902, Conveyance Book 27, p. 347 Heirs of Caroline Blum to Theresa Blum, the above property. (Theresa was one of Caroline Blum's six children. Each child received one-sixth of the estate, and Theresa paid her brother and sisters for the house and property).

February 14, 1903, Conveyance Book 30, p. 72. Theresa Blum to Lazard Blum, the above property, \$3,250.

July 1, 1916.

Lazard Blum, married to Rosa Miller, to Bank of Baton Rouge. Lot 4, square 44, measuring 64' front on Africa St. by a depth of 102'. \$6,500.

January 29, 1920

Rosa Blum (born Miller) to Maurice Pomponeau. The above property.

February 22, 1941

Pomponeau died leaving the property to his wife and his daughter, Mrs. Cecile Pomponeau McKay. Later, the daughter was divorced and married a Mr. Hayden.

1952

Mrs. Pomponeau died leaving Mrs. Cecile Hayden as the sole owner.

March 24, 1977

Mrs. Cecile Hayden to Bert S. Turner
The above property.

4. Original plan and construction:

To the west of the wide hall, there were two parlors with a common chimney, behind which was the dining room. An "L" shaped gallery stood around the rear and side (south and east) of the house.

HABS No. LA-1126 (Page 4)

The one-story kitchen dependency was connected to the house by a gallery.

5. Alterations and additions:

The 1923 Sanborn Insurance map shows that the house contained two apartments. The back gallery had been enclosed and extended on both stories, leaving two smaller porches and creating one new room on each level. Two chamfered posts of the original gallery are evident inside the southeast corner. On the first floor, the back parlor became the dining room and the original dining room was divided into a kitchen and pantry. The ceiling medallion from the old dining room is still intact in the present kitchen. The partition separating the pantry and kitchen is made of roughly hewn horizontal boards. The kitchen dependency was demolished. On the second floor, a bathroom, supported by two posts with braces, was added in the northeast corner.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Blum family ran a "fancy grocery" next door to their house. The 1891 Sanborn Insurance Map labels this store as "new". An advertisement for the "fancy grocery" was found in the History of the Government of Baton Rouge, 1904.

"Laz Blum 16 to 1
sells fancy and staple 16 ounces to a
groceries, wines and liquors pound
The famous Clover Hill Butter
Telephone 120
Cor. Africa and St. Napoleon Sts, Baton Rouge,
La."

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East

Baton Rouge Conveyance and Mortgage
Records, Centroplex.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Heck, Robert. Historic Baton Rouge.
1970, revised 1975.

"History of the Government of Baton
Rouge". Louisiana Collection, Louisiana
State University, 1904.

Planning Commission. Beauregard Town.
December 1977.

Sanborn Institute Map of Baton Rouge,
Sanborn-Perrins Map Co., 117 Broadway, New
York, New York, 1891, 1908, 1923.

3. Likely sources not investigated:

Mrs. Martin Levy, 2312 Dogwood Ave., Baton
Rouge, LA 70808, whose first husband was
Blum.

Mrs. Dave Beer, 3986 Richland Circle,
Baton Rouge, LA, whose mother was related
to Blums.

Prepared by Sibly McCormac Groff
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer, 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This two-story townhouse features a two-tier gallery on the front elevation with gingerbread jigsawn ornamentation on the balustrade, brackets and cornice.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The two-story house measures 29'-2" (three-bay front) by 60'-8".
2. Foundations: Brick piers.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: Frame with clapboard siding, painted white with green trim.
4. Structural system: Wooden frame.
5. Porches: The two-tier front gallery has chamfered posts and gingerbread jigsaw ornamentation on the balustrade, brackets and cornice. There are three concrete steps leading to the entrance. The second story is entered from the bedrooms.

The smaller back porch is reached by three concrete steps and has three chamfered posts with fan-like brackets on the first floor and one post with fan-like brackets and a plain capital on the second floor. There is an outside staircase with a square chamfered post connecting the first and second floors.

6. Chimneys: There are two stuccoed brick chimneys on the west side of the roof.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The principal door has two panels below one large, solid light, a rectangular transom, and rounded sidelights. On the east side there is another door leading into the entrance hall, which may have been a side door leading to the adjacent "fancy grocery".
 - b. Windows and shutters: The front elevation has full-length windows with six-over-nine-lights, double hung sash, and shutters.

BLUM HOUSE

HABS No. LA-1126 (Page 7)

8. Roof: The hipped roof is covered with asbestos shingles. A shed roof covers the back porch.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: This is a typical side hall plan, with the living and dining rooms to the right (west) connected by a door. The pantry and kitchen are at the rear of the house. To the east of the pantry are the bathroom and back bed room. The second floor plan is identical to the first with an additional room located above the entrance hall.
2. Stairways: In the entrance hall, there is a principal single flight staircase joining the first and second floors. Of particular note is the flared and bulbous newel post with recessed panels. The open-string staircase has turned balusters, simple brackets and a plain handrail.
3. Flooring: Most of the rooms have wooden floors; however, some have been covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered and painted or wall-papered. The one exception is the wall between the kitchen and pantry which is made of rough horizontal boards. The kitchen has beaded horizontal wainscoting.
5. Doorways and doors: The principal doors have four panels (two tiers of molded panels) with transoms and architrave trim. The doors that were added later are smaller and have plain trim.
6. Special decorative features: There is an ornate foliated plaster medallion in the front parlor. Another medallion, with plain moldings, is on the kitchen (former dining room) ceiling.

The fireplace mantles in the front parlor and dining room are made of cast iron, painted to simulate a dark marble.

They are styled to resemble Eastlake designs. The fireplace opening has a cast iron grill with an intricate design. The hearths are brown, black and white tile with a Greek fret pattern.

D. Site and surroundings:

1. General setting: The Blum house is located in a section of Baton Rouge called Beauregard Town, which was originally laid out in the early 1800s. The "Beauregard Town" district, presently applying for listing on the National Register, contains many mid to late nineteenth century and turn of the century houses providing an interesting, varied streetscape. Many of the houses have been adapted to legal and commercial offices.
2. Outbuildings: There is a nondescript storage facility in the rear (south) of the property.
3. Historic landscape design: Part of a cast iron fence remains to the east of the house and displays ornamentation including rosettes and scrolls.

Prepared by Sibyl McCormac Groff
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
August 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was jointly sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey and the City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge, Department of Public Works, Division of Community Development. Under the auspices of John

BLUM HOUSE

HABS No. LA-1126 (Page 9)

Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth Anderson, Principal Architect, the project was completed in the summer of 1978 at the HABS field office, Department of Architecture, Louisiana State University. The team was comprised of Sibyl McCormac Groff (Columbia University), project supervisor/historian; Timothy Allanbrook (Rhode Island School of Design), project foreman; architect Kate Johns (Arizona State University); and student architects William J. Graham (University of Maryland), Robert D. Louton (University of Arkansas), and George W. Steinrock, Jr. (University of Detroit).